

Black man for nonviolence more severely than White supremacists for violence.

Look, taking a knee may have started as a protest about racial inequality, about behavior by some in law enforcement discriminating against others in this country, but unarmed people of color are being killed simply for the color of their skin.

I think today taking a knee is becoming a broader sign of patriotism and respect for our country, for a country that can be even greater for every one of its citizens. It respects the lives lost for those in this country to fight for its ideals, which include nonviolent protests. It is a sign of love of country, a country with a promise that has to be for everyone regardless of the color of their skin.

I join so many now in the NFL and elsewhere in taking a knee for the America that we all aspire it to be.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President and to direct their remarks to the Chair.

□ 1015

APPLAUDING PRESIDENT TRUMP FOR HIS COMMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud President Trump for his comments last week which criticized the few NFL players who have chosen to kneel in protest during our national anthem. The President is right to publicly object to this disrespect to our flag and Nation. While we can disagree on politics and policies, we should not denigrate our flag and our national anthem.

I must mention that most NFL players stood in respect for the flag. It is just a few who didn't, who gave them a bad name and the sport a bad name.

In response to President Trump's criticism, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell called the President's remarks divisive. I would respond to Mr. Goodell that it is you and your players who disrespect our flag and our national anthem who are being divisive. The President defending our flag is not divisive.

My father and thousands of other Americans fought under our flag in the jungles of Vietnam. Young men and women have died recently in service to our flag in Iraq and Afghanistan. In my house, we honored our flag not only because of my father's service, but because of the deep sense of patriotism my parents instilled in me.

My mother, Lala Suarez Mooney, was born and raised in Fidel Castro's Cuba, where she and other members of her family were thrown into jail for opposing Castro's Communist regime. When she was 20, my mother escaped Cuba

and fled to America with barely a penny to her name. My mom and millions of other immigrants leave the flags of these other countries—brutal dictatorships, Communist regimes, and other oppressive regimes—to come to America to live under our flag.

All Americans, whether you came as an immigrant or you were born here, you stay to live under this flag. If you don't like it, you don't have to stay. You can go. No one is making you stay. We love this flag.

Listening to my parents' inspiring stories, I knew from a young age that I absolutely believed in the American ideals of liberty as set forth by our Founding Fathers. It is with this same sense of honor and patriotism that I support President Trump in calling for all NFL players to honor our flag and remember what has made our country great.

For a few hours many Sundays, I usually enjoy time with our son watching our favorite football teams battle on the gridiron. We root for different teams. As a nation, we forget about our political and other differences and come together to enjoy the sport of football. By these few players wrongly deciding to turn the game into a political statement, we lose that moment of national unity and respect for our country.

Sports have always been a unifying factor and a chance for the Nation to come together. NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, owners, coaches, and a few players are showing a lack of respect for our Nation and her military who gives them the freedom to play football. As the men and women of our armed services face challenges at home or abroad, we should put our differences aside and unite around our flag as a beacon of hope and understanding. I certainly respect anyone's right to protest peacefully and the right of an NFL team owner to discipline disorderly conduct or rude behavior.

Sadly, three NFL teams did not even leave the locker room to hear the playing of our national anthem. Just one person on those three teams, Pittsburgh Steeler Alejandro Villanueva, came out of the tunnel of the locker room. You can see other people standing back there in the tunnel. He came out of the tunnel of the locker room to honor our country.

Villanueva is a West Point graduate, former Army Ranger, and Bronze Star recipient. He knows the value of our flag. Sadly, instead of receiving the praise he deserved, many in the media attacked him. Even his coach, Mike Tomlin, said that when Alejandro Villanueva came out of that tunnel, he was "not respectful of our football team."

Not respectful of the team? Really, Coach? How about respect for the flag? How about our country which soldiers die for and the flag that allows you to play that football game? Unbelievable.

I hope all the young people out there look at Alejandro Villanueva as a bea-

con of honor and duty to his country above himself.

Professional athletes in this Nation, whether they like it or not, are an example for our young people. They should stop injecting anti-American politics into sports.

I applaud, again, President Trump for standing up for our flag and our national anthem. All NFL athletes should stand together and do the same.

PRIORITIZING PUERTO RICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. No, Mr. President, Puerto Rico is not doing well. We don't need to be reminded of the debt. We should remind ourselves of our responsibility to the 3.4 million people of the island nation of Puerto Rico. They are suffering greatly. Mr. Speaker, the people of Puerto Rico need our immediate and sustained help.

We all know that flooding, destruction, and complete elimination of the power grid for the whole island are among the consequences of Hurricane Maria, but this is no ordinary hurricane, and it hit at no ordinary time. Mr. Speaker, we need all hands on deck to make sure rescuing Puerto Rico becomes our number one priority.

Immediate needs must be met—fresh water, food, medicine, shelter, and fuel—but we need sustained investment and cooperation with the island's government and its people to make Puerto Rico livable again. Like a lot of Americans, I have watched with increasing horror and panic as the Governor of Puerto Rico, the mayor of San Juan, and ordinary Puerto Ricans have pleaded for more help.

The work of first responders and our military has been heroic, but the island needs more. One-third of the doctors—over 5,000—have left the island of Puerto Rico in the last 10 years. Hospitals have no doctors in some cases. Nurses, fuel, and medicine are running out at the hospitals that remain open. This is a public health crisis and should be declared a health emergency by the Federal Government.

Puerto Rico has been in an economic crisis for years. Five thousand people flee Puerto Rico every month—before two hurricanes hit—leaving behind many old, many young, the very poor, the very sick, and the very vulnerable. There is no food in supermarkets.

We need an airlift. We need an effort the scale of Dunkirk. We know the U.S. is capable. We can invade foreign countries with hundreds of thousands of troops, flawless communications, food, and security. We need the same effort now. We need the Federal Government to go all in to rescue Puerto Rico from a humanitarian crisis which is developing.

Welcome other nations if they want to help, Mr. President, like Cuba, that has offered doctors and other emergency assistance. But what I fear is